

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
19 June 1966

ARMY and DOS review(s) completed.

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
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Approved For Release 2004/12/14 : CIA-RDP79T00826A000900140001-1

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HIGHLIGHTS

Progovernment forces took control of the Buddhist struggle force strong points in Hue over the weekend. Allied contact with the VC remained light for the third consecutive day.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
Only minor contact with the VC was reported by the large Allied operations for the third consecutive day (Paras. 1-6). Press reports claim the VC attacked a POL facility north of Da Nang without success (Para. 7). VC sabotage of air bases and oil storage is apt to increase (Para. 8).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
Government control restored in Hue (Paras. 1-2). Colonel Ngo Quang Truong named commander of 1st Division replacing General Nhuan (Para. 3). In Saigon, Buddhist Institute sealed off and anniversary celebrations of Ky regime proceeded without incident (Paras. 4-5). The law establishing the constitutional assembly leaves the question of its legislative powers open (Para. 6). Recent open criticism of Tri Quang by moderate Buddhist leader Tam Chau may signal significant split in Buddhist ranks and reduction of political power of the Buddhist Institute (Para. 7).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:
There is nothing of significance to report.

IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: Rumors of a change in Hanoi's position on negotiations emanating from World Peace Council meetings have little substance (Paras. 1-4). DRV stepping up its propaganda campaign on trial of US pilots (Paras. 5-6).

ANNEX:

South Vietnam Battle Statistics 4-11 June 1966

Viet Cong Incidents

Viet Cong Attacks

Weapons Losses--GVN/VC

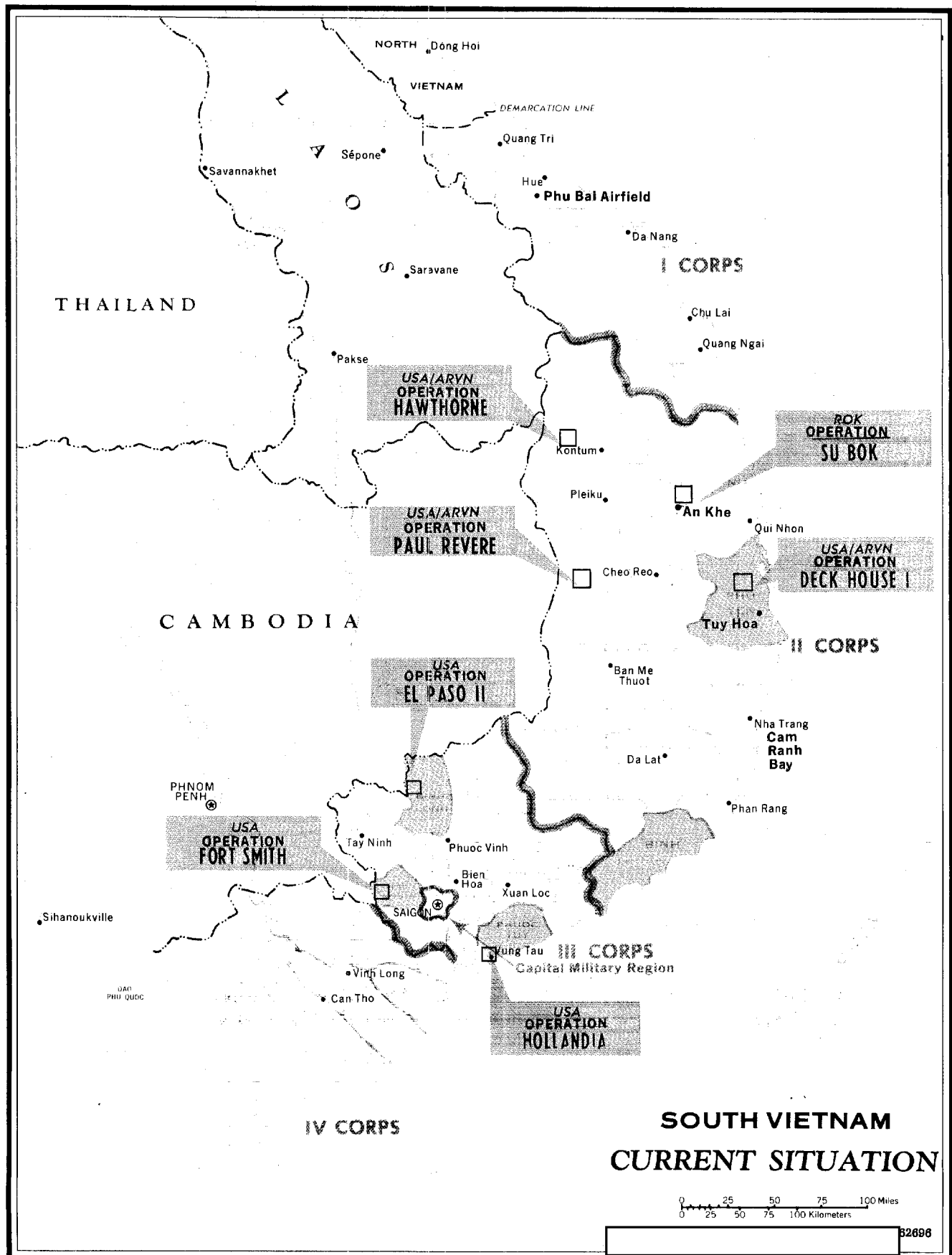
South Vietnam Battle Statistics 4-11 June 1966

Total Personnel Losses

Cumulative US Combat Casualties

Total Friendly Forces Personnel Losses

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. For the third consecutive day, there are no reports of major fighting in the 25 battalion-size or larger operations in which Allied or Vietnamese forces are involved.

2. In the central highlands, Operations HAWTHORNE and PAUL REVERE continue with light contact. The two US/ARVN operations have so far accounted for 973 VC/PAVN dead compared to Allied losses of 82 (56 US and 26 Vietnamese). HAWTHORNE and REVERE are intended to blunt the thrust of the Communist "monsoon offensive" in this area.

3. On 18 June the 1st Regiment of the Capital ROK Division engaged an unknown VC force near An Khe killing 22 of the enemy. Known as Operation SU'BOK, the Koreans have been operating in Binh Dinh Province since 26 March and have reportedly killed 214 VC/PAVN troops. ROK losses to date are 17 killed and 54 wounded.

4. US Marines and ARVN troops are carrying out a three- to seven-day search and destroy operation 20 miles north of Tuy Hoa known as DECK HOUSE I. A 2,900-man VC/PAVN force is believed to be in the area but so far contact has been described as light.

5. HOLLANDIA, a ten-day search and destroy operation intended to secure the Long Hai Peninsula in Phuoc Tuy Province, was terminated on 18 June. Elements of the US 173rd Airborne Brigade suffered losses of 9 killed and 68 wounded. Only 4 VC are known to have been killed.

6. Near the Cambodian border in Binh Long and Hau Nghia provinces, Operations EL PASO II and FORT SMITH continue with little or no contact. The two operations have accounted for 206 Communist dead while US losses have been 51 killed.

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Viet Cong Activity

7. According to press reports, a VC attack on a POL facility eight miles north of Da Nang was thwarted by US Marines in the early morning hours of 19 June (Vietnam time). The VC, operating from sampans in the Ca De River, directed mortar fire at an oil storage tank and a US mortar position. The marines sank one sampan and forced another to shore, killing two VC and capturing 12 others.

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9. [REDACTED] MACV has reported that the VC have purchased one million piasters worth of medical supplies in Binh Thuan Province and intend to move them by boat to Phu Yen Province. J-2 MACV comments that the VC units in Phu Yen Province have been hard hit in the past six months and are likely to be in need of such supplies.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Progovernment forces, reinforced by marine and airborne troopers, took control of the Buddhist struggle force strongpoints in Hue over the weekend. They encountered no significant, organized opposition from dissident elements. Armed resistance is now confined mainly to occasional sniper fire on government units moving in and around the city. The government forces are reported continuing to act with restraint and minimum use of force against the populace in their efforts to complete the restoration of order.

2. The government military sweep in Hue was accompanied by a strong propaganda campaign using leaflets and the local radio to explain the actions of the Ky regime. Government radiobroadcasts in the city indicate that the loyal ARVN forces will move quickly and forcefully to break up any new anti-government violence. A continuation of nonviolent demonstrations will be permitted, however. During their sweep operations, the loyal forces cleared most of the roads in and about the city of Buddhist altars and other debris-type roadblocks; military traffic is now said to be moving smoothly.

3. General Nhuan, the wavering commander of the ARVN 1st Division who failed to move actively against the dissidents, was dismissed from his command on 18 June and replaced by Colonel Ngo Quang Truong, a deputy commander in the ARVN airborne forces, units of which have played an active part in the action against the dissidents. Truong is reportedly taking a tough line with elements of the ARVN 1st Division who have supported the struggle movement. South Vietnamese military officers in Saigon believe he will be effective in returning the 1st Division to responsible duties under government orders.

Saigon

4. The Ky government tightly sealed off the Buddhist Institute on 18 and 19 June, and restricted entry and egress into the area around the Institute.

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The action followed a fatal attack of 17 June outside the Institute by militant Buddhist followers on a government policemen. The government's move resulted in an immediate dampening down of the violent agitation of the past few days in Saigon and permitted the regime's celebrations of its 1st anniversary on 19 June to proceed without incident. A Buddhist call for a general strike starting on 18 June apparently evoked no response in Saigon. Business activity remained normal.

5. The regime's celebrations featured speeches by Premier Ky and Chief of State Thieu, both of whom took a very optimistic line on the present GVN political and military situation. Thieu called for a further tightening of unity in the armed forces. The government also published the final texts of the laws on the upcoming elections and on the constituent assembly over the weekend.

Rules for the Assembly

6. In the final text, the question of the legislative authority of the constituent assembly was left open ended. Under terms of the law, the assembly was not specifically given legislative powers, therefore it has none. It is possible under the law, however, that the assembly could write legislative powers for itself into the constitution. The government, however, retained some veto power over the whole operation by a provision which states that the directorate can recommend modifications of the constitution and, unless they are rejected by a two-thirds vote of the assembly, they become part of the final document. The law on the assembly also states that the directorate has from three to six months after the assembly completes its work to "set in place" the governmental institutions provided for in the constitution.

Buddhist Policy

7. The US Embassy in Saigon believes that the recent critical remarks by moderate Buddhist leader

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Tam Chau in which he assailed the extremist members of the Institute, particularly Tri Quang, probably signal the public emergence of a deep split in the Institute ranks between the Tri Quang followers and more moderate elements. There are some indications, according to the embassy, that the southern and northern elements within the Institute who resent Quang's policies might try to form a separate Buddhist organization. Even if the Institute is able to heal the split in its ranks, it is the embassy's view that the Institute has now been reduced in political power to the level of the other major, non-military factions contending for governmental influence in South Vietnam.

III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Hanoi on Negotiations

1. Several reports of a new Vietnamese peace initiative have emanated from the recent session of the World Peace Council meeting in Geneva. All of those received to date, however, appear to represent a by-product of Sino-Soviet wrangling rather than an indication of a genuine change in Hanoi's attitude toward a negotiated settlement of the war.

2. Reports of the conference from all sources indicate that Sino-Soviet squabbling was intense. [REDACTED] the conference was one long shouting match between the Chinese and other delegates." Both the Soviet and Chinese delegates appear to have used the Vietnam issue to attack each other, the Soviets continuing their tactic of calling for united action, while the Chinese launched an abusive attack on the Soviet leadership and its policies.

3. The Vietnamese appear to have carefully refrained from taking sides in any of the dispute between Chinese and Soviet representatives. The press excerpts of the speeches of both Vietnamese Communist delegates--Nguyen Duy Tinh representing Hanoi and Dinh Ba Thi representing the Liberation Front--were standard reiterations of the well-known Communist terms for a negotiated settlement.

4. Hanoi reaffirmed its adherence to its long-standing four-point proposal on negotiations as late as 18 June. In reporting Canadian Ambassador Ronning's visit to North Vietnam, Hanoi radio said that the DRV position on a negotiated settlement had been made clear in Ho Chi Minh's letter to world leaders on 24 January. In this letter the North Vietnamese President stated that the four points still reflected the DRV's attitude on negotiations.

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DRV Propaganda on Trial of US Pilots

5. Hanoi is continuing to build up the momentum of its propaganda campaigning calling for the trial of US pilots held prisoner in North Vietnam. The army newspaper on 16 June described widespread meetings and petitions urging "immediate" punishment of the pilots, and Radio Hanoi on 17 June described rallies of youth groups and scientific and medical workers demanding the trial of "US war criminals." A 19 June broadcast said that everybody in North Vietnam from dockworkers to farmers were demanding "proper punishment for US air pirates."

6. The DRV has repeatedly threatened to try the pilots as war criminals for over a year, but an intensive campaign appears to have been launched early this month depicting widespread popular demand that these trials be held, perhaps in the near future. This campaign coincides with the timing of a British movement led by philosopher Bertrand Russell to stage a mock trial of "US war criminals" and may be intended to provide some detailed ammunition for the British trials. The Vietnamese propaganda frequently links its own threats to try US pilots with the scheduled mock trials in Britain.

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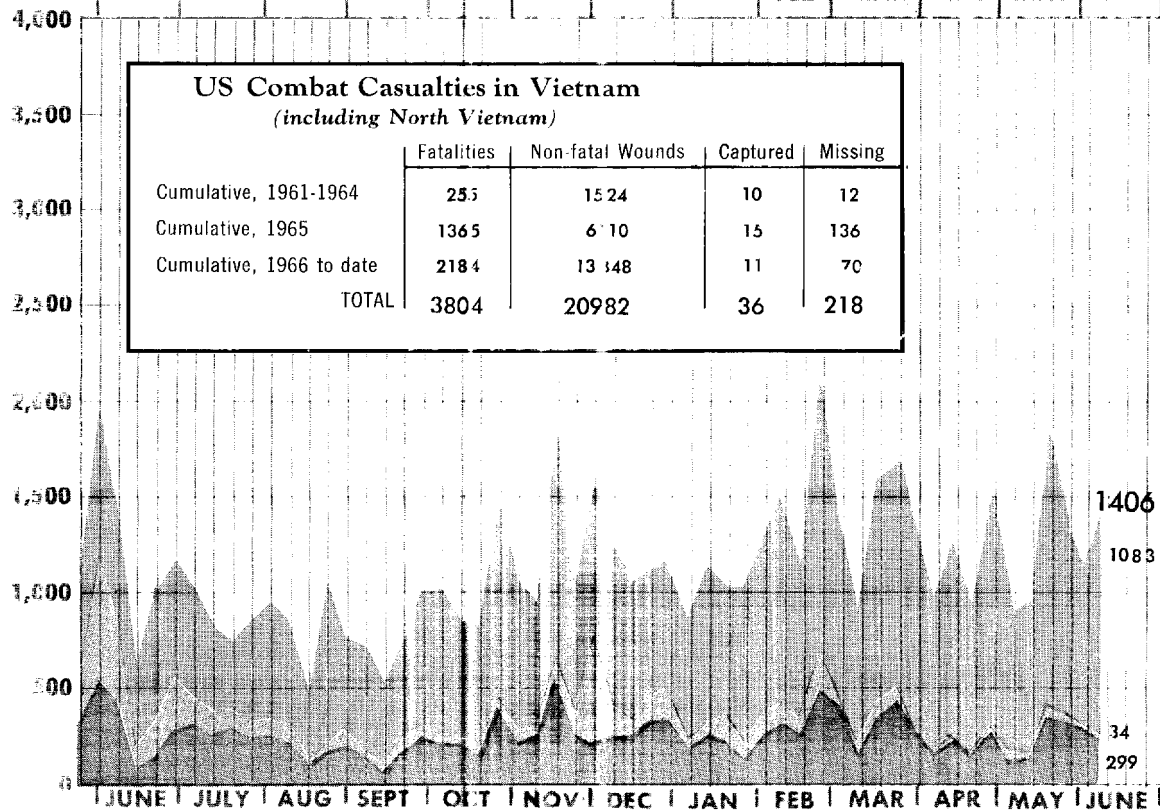
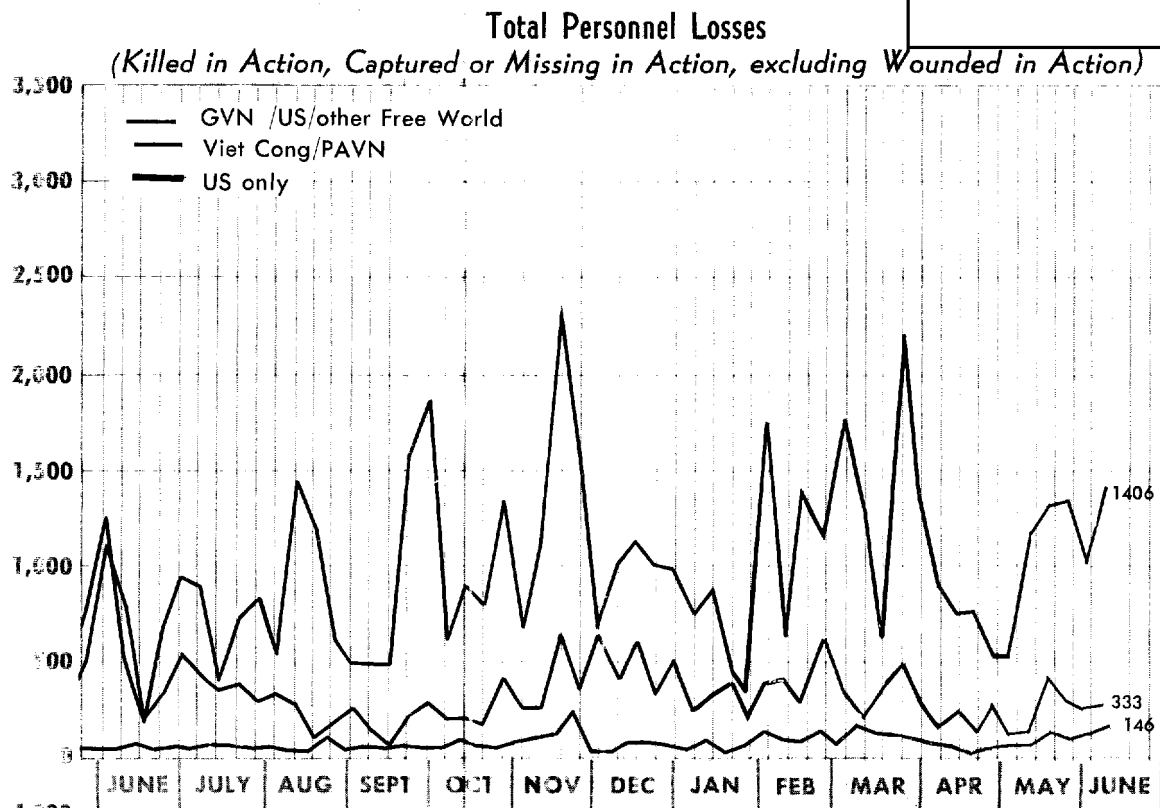
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SOUTH VIETNAM BATTLE STATISTICS

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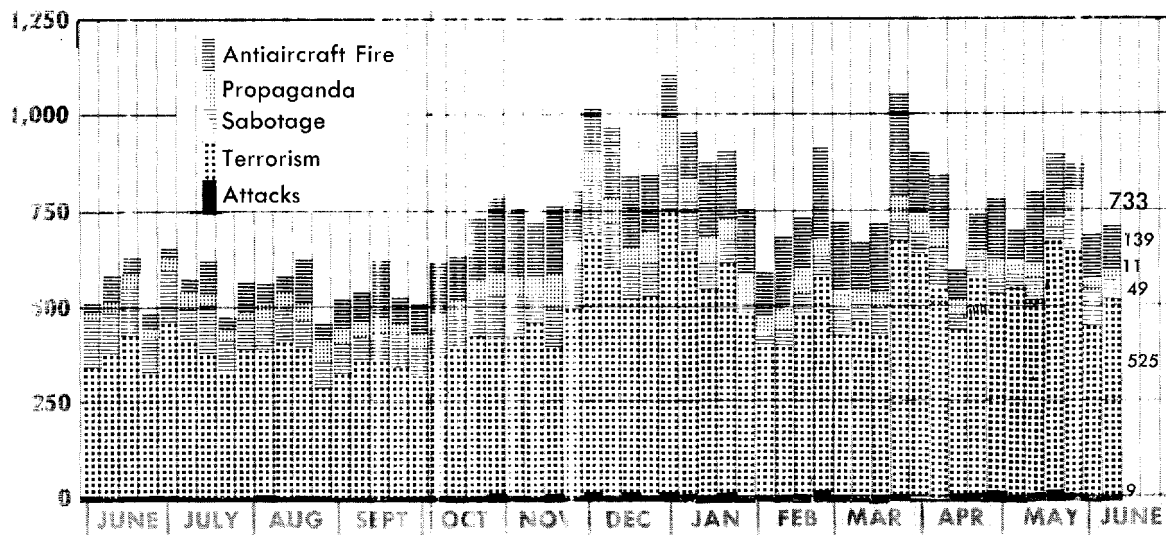
Total Friendly Forces Personnel Losses
(US/GVN/Other Free World)

62877 Killed in action Missing or Captured in action Wounded in action

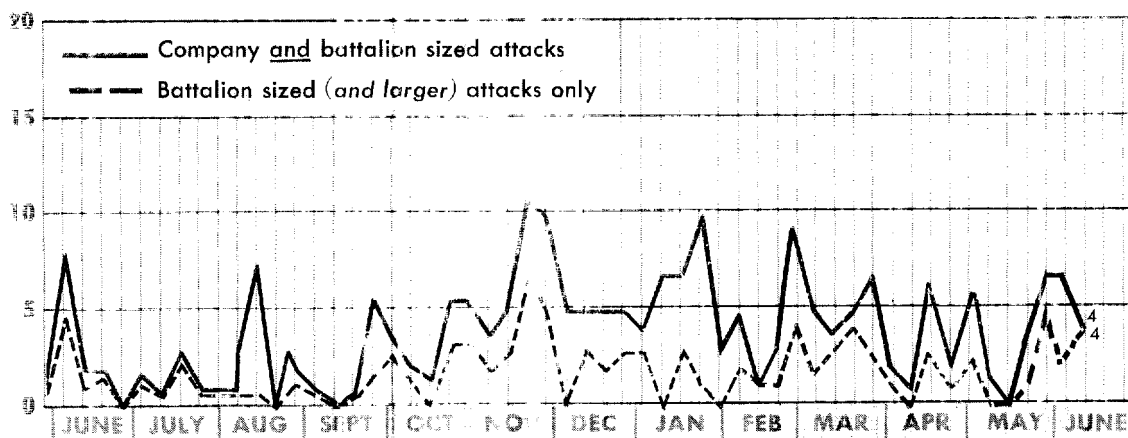
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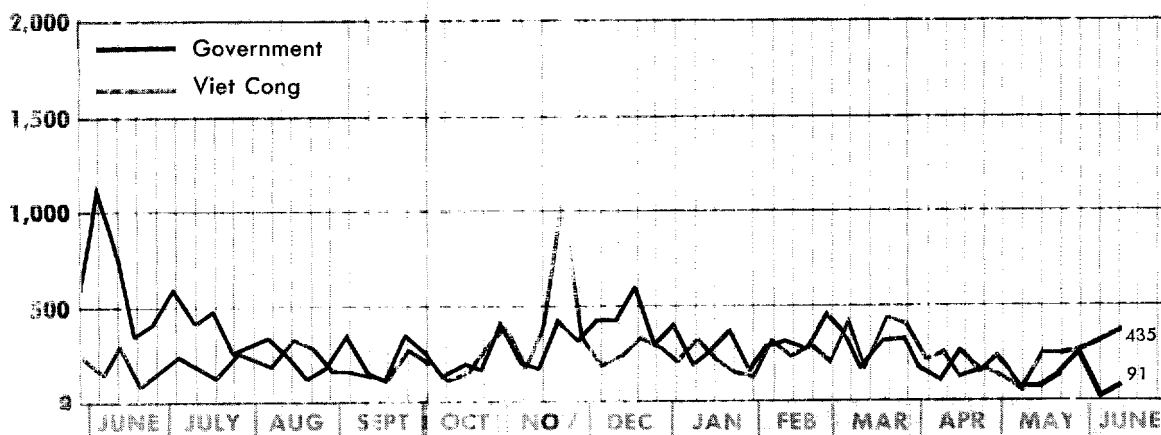
Viet Cong Incidents



Viet Cong Attacks



Weapons Losses



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